

**Keswick**  
**Urban Sanitary District**

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**ANNUAL REPORT**


**OF THE**

**MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH**

**For the Year 1920.**

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# REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH FOR THE YEAR 1920.

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TO THE KESWICK URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

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GENTLEMEN,—

I have the honour of presenting to you my report on the health of your District for the year 1920, and it will be found, I think, to compare very favourably with its predecessors.

## A.—THE NATURAL AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS—

(1) *Physical features—Occupation and mode of life of the inhabitants*—were so fully treated in my last report that repetition here is unnecessary.

The Rainfall shows an increase on that of 1919 from 43·25 inches in that year to 56·98 in this, the average for the last 17 years being 55·66. It naturally follows that a decrease in the hours of sunshine is to be expected—the total in 1920 being 1,211 hours 30 minutes, as compared with 1,371 hours 35 minutes in 1919. The following table, kindly drawn up by Mr. Swinburn from his observations at the Town's Meteorological Station furnishes fuller details :—

RAINFALL.				RAINFALL.				GREATEST RAINFALL.	
	inches	days			Inches	days		inches	
1903	76.99	on	243	Jan.	6.46	on	28	.91	on 10th
1904	48.90	,,	215	Feb.	5.50	,,	21	1.74	,, 9th
1905	45.34	,,	210	Mar.	9.04	,,	23	2.06	,, 27th
1906	51.66	,,	220	April	3.58	,,	25	.44	,, 13th
1907	52.81	,,	225	May	6.74	,,	22	1.61	,, 18th
1908	51.51	,,	211	June	2.43	,,	13	1.09	,, 27th
1909	59.35	,,	208	July	5.46	,,	31	.83	,, 14th
1910	59.34	,,	212	Aug.	2.40	,,	14	.75	,, 17th
1911	60.91	,,	185	Sept.	2.68	,,	18	.70	,, 16th
1912	57.97	,,	223	Oct.	2.84	,,	11	.93	,, 3rd
1913	53.11	,,	209	Nov.	4.46	,,	17	1.46	,, 14th
1914	60.05	,,	202	Dec.	5.30	,,	19	.82	,, 20th
1915	45.77	,,	187		—	—			
1916	64.22	,,	244		56.98	242			
1917	49.03	,,	200						
1918	64.84	,,	225						
1919	43.25	,,	214						
1920	56.98	,,	242						
				Average Rainfall (1903--1920)					
				55.66 inches.					

SUNSHINE.				SUNSHINE.			
	hours.	mins.	days.		hrs.	mins.	days
1903	1236	50	on 258	Jan.	30	40	on 12
1904	1375	5	,, 590	Feb.	63	50	,, 19
1905	1348	55	,, 286	Mar.	81	40	,, 22
1906	1253	40	,, 274	April	86	5	,, 24
1907	1102	45	,, 258	May	151	10	,, 29
1908	1348	20	,, 253	June	193	25	,, 28
1909	1402	20	,, 257	July	95	10	,, 26
1910	1333	10	,, 260	Aug.	127	0	,, 28
1911	1601	55	,, 255	Sept.	134	20	,, 30
1912	1016	25	,, 244	Oct.	145	10	,, 27
1913	1246	20	,, 258	Nov.	67	10	,, 19
1914	1456	45	,, 253	Dec.	35	50	,, 16
1915	1568	25	,, 273		—	—	—
1916	1250	25	,, 255		1,211	30	280
1917	1366	25	,, 278				
1918	1289	40	,, 259				
1919	1371	35	,, 264				
1920	1211	30	,, 280				
				Average Sunshine			
				(1903—1920),			
				1,321 hrs. 12 mins.			

The population at the census of 1911 was 4,403. For 1919 it was estimated at 4,216, and this figure may be taken as approximately correct for 1920.

The total number of Births registered in the district was 84 (48 boys and 36 girls), an increase of 26 on 1919, with a rate of 19·92 per 1,000. Six of the total were illegitimate.

The Deaths numbered 48, giving a general death rate of 11·38 per 1,000, while the infantile mortality (*i.e.*, deaths per 1,000 births) was 47·6.

It is interesting to note that the provisional statistics for 1920, recently published by the Registrar-General, show the death rate and also the infantile mortality for England and Wales to be the lowest ever recorded; the number of births the highest—and the actual number of deaths the lowest since 1862 when the population was only 20 millions. Compared with our own district we therefore have

	Birth rate.	Death rate.	Infantile death rate.
England and Wales	25·4	12·4	80
Keswick Urban District	19·92	11·38	47·6

It is especially gratifying to find the infantile mortality still so low and particularly so considering that all the four deaths which occurred in children under 1 year were due to congenital defects and not to causes usually considered preventable.

The ages at death were as follows:—Over 65 years, 29; between 45 and 65, 9; between 25 and 45, 2; between 5 and 15, 2; between 1 and 5, 2; under 1 year, 4.

The causes included : — Heart Disease, 14 ; Apoplexy, 8 ; Cancer, 4 ; Diabetes, 2 ; Encephalitis, 1 ; Bronchitis, 1 ; Appendicitis, 1 ; Congenital Defects, 4 ; Tubercular Meningitis, 1 ; General Tuberculosis, 1 ; and other ill-defined causes, 9. None were due to Zymotic Disease.

### **Sanitary Circumstances.**

The Water Supply has continued pure, abundant, and constant, except in the case of High Briery and parts of Chestnut Hill where, on account of the high elevation of these areas, there have been times when the supply has failed. But the Surveyor is hopeful that, by rearranging the supplies from the various reservoirs and preventing waste, a remedy may shortly be found and the supply become universally constant.

Though pollution of rivers occurs to only a slight extent, there are still a few isolated cases of water closets and pig styies situated along the banks of the Greta which are liable to cause contamination. These are being dealt with.

The Sewage Works continue to produce excellent results, but the depreciation—particularly in the pumping machinery—of the last few years has necessitated renewals and repairs to a considerable extent. The storm water filter has also been rendered more efficient, and it has been decided not to allow at any time, untreated sewage to be turned on to the irrigation ground.



## CLOSET ACCOMMODATION.

The Water Closet System is now almost universally adopted, and only at Briery and Forge—to which districts the sewers do not extend—are privies sanctioned. The proportion of closets to houses insisted upon as far as possible is 1 to 2 houses—but even this is not ideal—and wherever possible, each house is required to provide its own.

Scavenging is carried out bi-weekly by means of open carts for which covers ought to be provided in order to prevent the dissemination of dust and odour, and possibly disease. Sanitary dustbins, too, are not as universally in use as they should be, and the only way of securing their general adoption would seem to be for the Council themselves to provide such proper dustbins as a part of the regular scavenging plant. This suggestion—which is not original—is in accordance with the Public Health Acts, 1875, and approved of by the Ministry of Health, and its adoption would secure the abolition of such insanitary make-shifts as buckets, wooden boxes, &c.

Inspections of the District generally and particularly when required have been made throughout the year, and the Sanitary Inspector furnishes the following statement, showing the number and nature of formal inspections made by him and his predecessor:

Pig styres near dwelling houses closed	2
Soil pipes ventilated and repaired	1
Rain water pipes repaired	1
Paving and drainage of yards attended to	1

## **Premises and occupations which can be controlled by Bye-laws and Regulations.**

The Slaughter-houses, Bake-houses, Cowsheds, Dairies, &c., have been under constant supervision and have been found in good order and well kept. One slaughter-house is unsuitable for its purpose by reason of site and structure. There is but one Common Lodging-house, and this is unregistered on account of its not complying with the necessary conditions.

## **Other Sanitary Conditions requiring notice**

The provision of Public Lavatories is very pressing, and the question is one which for some time past has occupied the serious attention of the Council. The final decision to erect Public Conveniences underground in the Lower Market Square has at length been arrived at, and it is most important that the work should be pressed forward as rapidly as possible so as to be ready in time for the beginning of the season. In these days of motor traffic, when large numbers of people arrive from considerable distances without having had the opportunities which railways afford, the question becomes one of great urgency.

## **Food.**

(a) The fresh Milk Supply has proved sufficient for the needs of the community without any special measures having to be taken. One Dairy supplies Grade A. For the rest, the milk is of good quality but would be freer from extraneous dirt were more



attention paid to the cattle, byres, and milking process than at present prevails.

The cattle themselves are under periodic inspection by the Veterinary Inspector, whose reports have been uniformly favourable.

No milk has been distributed under the Milk Order, 1919.

(b) The meat has been inspected, as far as circumstances permit, under a system of private slaughter-houses. Of these the number registered and licensed is as follows :—

	In 1914.	In 1920.	In Dec., 1920.
Registered	4	4	4
Licensed	0	0	0
	—	—	—
Total	4	4	4

## **Prevalence and Control over Infectious Diseases.**

The district has enjoyed comparative immunity from Zymotic Disease, the only notifications received being Erysipelas, 3 ; Diphtheria, 3 ; Tuberculosis, 7 on Form A (including 2 visitors), 1 on Form D ; Pneumonia, 4 ; Malaria, 3 (all contracted abroad) ; Paratyphoid B, 1 ; and Chicken pox, which became notifiable in July, 16—(8 in Oct., 5 in Nov., and 3 in Dec.)

School teachers have shown themselves willing and helpful in notifying cases of suspected infectious disease among their scholars. The cases of diphtheria were scattered and, being sufficiently isolated at home, were not removed to hospital.

Antitoxin is always supplied gratuitously.

Bacteriological analysis is provided through the Lister Institute, and 35 swabs were examined for the diphtheria bacillus, with negative results in 23 and positive in 12. In one case, 11 swabs were taken before the child could be declared free from infection.

Sputum has also been examined for tubercle with 1 positive result; and blood for typhoid (Widal reaction), with one positive Paratyphoid B result.

Owing to the prevalence of Small-pox throughout the country, warning notices were issued and the public advised to protect themselves by vaccination and re-vaccination. A small number were vaccinated by the Public Vaccinator, but none under the Public Health (Small-pox prevention) Regulations of 1917.

Influenza has fortunately not been epidemic, and Tuberculosis, judging from the notifications, appears to be rather on the increase; but this source of information cannot be considered reliable.

### **Sanitary Administration.**

The offices of Surveyor and Sanitary Inspector are still merged into one, and these combined duties, together with those which a housing scheme involves, throw, in my opinion, an impossible amount of work upon one official. Through the regrettable retirement of Mr. T. B. Simmons in May, the Council lost the services of a most capable official, but were fortunate in securing as his successor, Mr. C. D. Bell, A.R.S.I., M.Sc., who has already done much valuable work.

## **Hospital Accommodation.**

Only one case, that of Paratyphoid B, has been admitted to Whinlatter Hospital during the year, and he was discharged recovered after a detention of 8 weeks and 4 days, and after freedom from infection had been proved by bacteriological tests. The Hospital affords accommodation for 10 patients, and serves its purpose well. Its value will be enhanced when the steam disinfecter (already purchased) is in working order. The cost of a telephone was estimated at £31 per annum, and this, together with the electric lighting scheme, have had to be abandoned for the present on the ground of expense.

The Horse Ambulance has been put into good repair, and serves its purpose admirably.

Small-pox cases, should they arise, will be treated at the Hospital of the Joint Hospital Board, situated at Broughton, and arrangements have been made by the County Medical Officer for their removal by Motor Ambulance.

## **Housing.**

This question was exhaustively treated in my last year's report, and I regret to say that during 1920, owing largely to shortage of labour and material, very little progress has been made with the scheme. No unfit dwellings have been condemned and no material improvements have been made in houses or areas, capable of such ; but the work of erecting new workmen's dwellings has commenced in earnest, and out of the 56 proposed, as a first instalment, 26 are in hand, of which 4 are now well on towards completion. These are of types A (20) and A2 (6) with 2 and 3 bedrooms respectively.

## Appendices (Housing Conditions).

The data obtainable gives the following results :

Estimated population	4'216
General death rate	11'38
Death rate from tuberculosis	0'47
Infantile mortality	47'6
Number of dwelling-houses	1,140
Number of working-class houses erected	0
Number of dwelling-houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation	1
Number of defective dwellings rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their officers	1
Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied	6
Number of dwelling-houses in which defects were remedied by owners	2

When one considers that the original scheme involved alterations and improvement of 160 houses and the demolition of 30, it becomes apparent how little comparatively has been done and what a mass of work lies ahead of us.

Allow me again, gentlemen, to thank you for your kind support and consideration during the past year.

Your obedient servant,

J. R. BURNETT,

Medical Officer of Health.

3rd March, 1921.